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MRS JELLINEC'S MISTAKES.

In a semi-detached villa-residence, one of a long file of similar abodes lining a road uniting Notting Hill with Kensington, lived the Jellicoes—most respectable people. The house was neat and compact, with that slight drawback about it which attaches itself more or less to all semi-detached edifices where the fireplaces are constructed back to back, and which exhibits itself in the curious phenomenon, that whenever a fire is lighted in the front-parlour of No. 1, the smoke always comes down the chimney of the back-parlour of No. 2, and so on through all the rooms in the house. But this admitted—and I think that full justice has never yet been rendered to the singular ingenuity of the British builder who first effected this contrivance—the house was convenient and pleasant enough, with the regulation oak-graining in the parlours, and bird's-eye maple in the drawing-rooms, with white crockery door-handles and finger-plates, marble-paper in the hall, a small garden in front, a larger one in the rear, terminating in a part-Gothic, part-Chinese, part-beechie, and wholly Cockney summer-house; a flight of very white steps, evergreens in pots masking the kitchen-windows, a mahogany-painted door, and a bronze knocker and foot-scraper of *cinque-ento* design. The Jellicoes were generally regarded as 'well to do.' Mr Jellicoe was a stock-broker and substantial capitalist. There was nothing Stock Exchangey, or risky, or uncertain, about Mr Jellicoe. 'James never speculates,' Mrs Jellicoe was always saying, although, to do her justice, she understood as little about her husband's business as any wife ever did, and that is saying a good deal; but the statement conveyed to her mind a consolatory sense of repose, and safeness, and solidity. 'James never speculates.' 'I made my money, such as it is,' Jellicoe would occasionally confess, when melted a little by that superb port he produced on high days only—'I made my money in the great Cape Court year. You know when I mean as well as any man. Ah, that *was* a time! I never bought a share for myself—all my transactions were for others, and my commissions amounted to—well, a very tidy little sum, I can tell you.' So Jellicoe. I know there are others who doubt the facts of this statement; they say that Jellicoe always secured allotments of shares when they were worth having, and though he did not hold them long, always managed to sell at a profit. I don't know how this may be; perhaps, when he thought his success pretty certain, he did not call it speculating; but when there was that frightful fall in guaranteed Michigans and Ohios, I, for one, observed

that Jellicoe looked a little alarmed. But, after all, that is neither here nor there.

Mr Jellicoe always left Notting Hill by the nine o'clock omnibus, returning home to dinner at six o'clock. He was a punctual man, and had never been known to miss the omnibus, or to come home late for dinner. If the cook could not have that meal ready at the appointed hour, she was dismissed Mr Jellicoe's service. About time and about money he was a jealous disciplinarian. The rumour went that Jellicoe kept account of his own personal expenditure even by double-entry; that he closed his books strictly at the end of the year, and drew up a balance-sheet of his assets and liabilities. He was always, it would seem, prepared for bankruptcy—the secret for success in which art seems to be, that you shall be as careless as you like with your money so long as you are careful with your books. Jellicoe was ready at any moment to place his schedule in the hands of the commissioner, and take the necessary oath about it forthwith. Now, if there was a brier in the flowery path of Mrs Jellicoe's married life, it was in reference to this martinet scrupulousness of Jellicoe's with regard to money. She was, generally speaking, a happy woman—a largely framed, amply covered, serene, sedate, comfortable woman, with a snug home, an affectionate husband, and a group of robust, hearty children about her; but that auditing of her housekeeping-book by Jellicoe! She was not a clever woman; still, she had learned the use of the globes and Persian painting; she had acquired French from a Parisian, and singing from a member of the Royal Academy; as a school-girl, she had worked one of the most elaborate samplers that ever was seen, crowded with alphabets, stars, yew-trees, fireworks, paroquets, and wreaths of flowers; but she was open to the charge of arithmetical deficiencies, which became the more appalling in the exaggerated view it pleased Jellicoe to take of the matter of figures. Mrs Jellicoe was not a good accountant, and the consequent occasional *hiatus* and confusions appearing in the housekeeping-books were the subject of serious discussion between Mrs Jellicoe and her lord. Usually, the Jellicoes, after the withdrawal to rest of their children, passed together evenings remarkable, if not for liveliness, at anyrate for placidity. Apart from his newspaper, of which institution he was a thoroughly British devotee, Mr Jellicoe was not a great reader. Still, he subscribed to the great bibliotheca in New Oxford Street, and, as he seldom changed his books, was probably one of the librarian's most esteemed customers. There was generally a novel in process of perusal by Mr and Mrs Jellicoe, and of this a chapter was read every evening after the children had gone to bed. They

steadily took up the book at the point at which they had put it down on the previous evening, always keeping a 'stop' in to mark their progress. This was not rapid, but Mr Jellicoe appeared to deem it sufficient, and that he was thus keeping himself *au courant* with the literature of his time in a decidedly commendable way. There was thus remarkable fact about the reading, that whenever Mr Jellicoe read aloud, Mrs Jellicoe invariably went to sleep; and if Mrs Jellicoe read, then Mr Jellicoe reposed. The result was, that though jointly, perhaps, they might have passed a tolerable examination in the book, severally, their acquaintance with it was of a character rather detached and incomplete.

But there were evenings when Jellicoe was not inclined for novel-reading, and still less for sleep; when he was fearfully unromantic and wide awake; when he would produce his desk—solid mahogany, with heavy brass-mountings—and commence what he called 'checking' the housekeeping-book. It was a dreadful time for Mrs Jellicoe. She must wait there to give all required explanation; she must submit to the most probing questions; she must be prepared at all points with answers; she, who knew what fearful chasms there were in the accounts, who knew that they could not, would not balance; that she had made her head ache for a whole day, trying to recollect some forgotten expenditure, and that her entire system of calculation was hopelessly faulty and wrong. Grand, reposed, ample woman that she was, she positively shivered and cowered on the sofa while Jellicoe hung over the accounts, frowning intensely—but that is always part of an addition sum—with his pen in his mouth, the two ends projecting on each side of his face, like the whiskers of a cat, and imparting to him an air of quite vindictive severity. Of course the book would not balance, would not add up. Jellicoe tried hard for a long time, only in the end to abandon the task in despair, or to proclaim some alarming deficiency in the housekeeping exchequer. The whole audit could only terminate in the ignominious discomfiture of Mrs Jellicoe; and there was a great gulf of distrust, and uneasiness, and disappointment, between Mr and Mrs Jellicoe as they retired to rest that night.

A cloud hung over the breakfast of the ensuing morning. There was gloom, there was silence. You could hear the lumps of sugar fall gratingly to the bottom of the cups; you could hear the tea gurgle out of the pot, the dry toast crackle and yield beneath the crunching efforts of Mr Jellicoe. 'Missy,' stirring her bread and milk, made quite a noise with the spoon. Missy, otherwise known as 'Totty,' was the youngest scion of the House of Jellicoe; and on condition of being 'good,' which meant making no noise, and only speaking when she was spoken to, was permitted to breakfast with papa. The young lady's brothers had been up some time, and were now suffering under the efforts of little Miss Burke, the governess, to graft education on them; a painful business for all concerned, though Jellicoe was proud of Bob's being put through his third declension in the Eton Latin Grammar. They were nice, clean, red and white, muscular children, but not clever. In the daytime, they were attired as Rob Roy Macgregor Campbells; in the evening, especially after dinner-parties at Jellicoe's, they appeared as so many infantine Hamlets, Princes of Denmark, in black velvet and silk-tights. Mrs Jellicoe bent over the tea-cups. She looked rather dismal and preoccupied. She was deterred from attempting conversation by the portentous air of Jellicoe. If she ever caught his eye, he immediately turned away, to regard the black marble clock on the mantel-piece, as though to measure his time for the omnibus. Missy spooned away at her bread and milk, surveying her silent parents now and then with her great, round, wondering blue eyes, but saying nothing. 'Time is time!' and Mr Jellicoe

rose to put on his boots. He was prone to indulge in that description of sagacious proverbs. He was for ever saying, 'Time is time,' 'Money is money,' 'Business is business,' as though he found great solace and support to his commercial constitution by the application of such tonic truisms.

'Mamma is coming to-day,' observed Mrs Jellicoe; 'she's engaged a fly, and is going shopping.'

'I don't see that we want anything,' replied Mr Jellicoe, moodily. 'I hate unnecessary purchases—I hate bargains.'

'Well, James, the children's frocks'—

'Will do very well for the present, I'm sure.'

'They must have some summer things'

'Well, wait till the summer comes: it's a white frost this morning.'

'And then, there's Meeker's dinner-party next week; and I—'

'Well, you've your amber satin—what more can you want? The expenditure lately has been ruinous—quite ruinous, Amelia. There; don't say anything more. I must go now, or I shall miss the bus.'

He kissed his wife, rather flabbily than tenderly, it must be owned; he kissed Missy also—on the cheek, her lips being clouded with bread and milk—and went his way.

'No, no,' he said, as he descended the snow-white steps; 'five pounds is five pounds!'

And that was about the amount of the deficiency in Mrs Jellicoe's housekeeping-book.

If you once concede that Mrs Jellicoe was a stout woman, you cannot then escape from the admission that Mrs Perkins, the mother of Mrs Jellicoe, was a very stout woman: she was taller, broader, heavier, and more sweeping and superb in every way. When Mrs Jellicoe wore silk, Mrs Perkins wore velvet; when the daughter appeared in lace and ribbons, the mother was to be seen in jewels and feathers. Not that there was any competition between them; Mrs Jellicoe at once confessed the superiority and inimitability of her parent.

'Isn't Ma a wonder?' was an inquiry she continually submitted to her friends. 'How she wears! More than sixty. Yes, her own hair. No, not the ringlets—those, of course, are put on. Lovely complexion, hasn't she? Ask her to sing. She'll be so pleased. She had a splendid voice.'

Upon solicitations consequent upon these remarks, Mrs Perkins was occasionally led to the piano, a witching smile broadening her already broad and rather flushed face; and the instrument, laboured by no gentle hand, a strong guttural sort of contralto voice was found to be in her possession, and *Bonny Dundee* was trotted out with a staccato gusto quite exhilarating to hear. I don't fancy that Jellicoe himself greatly relished these musical ebullitions on the part of his mother-in-law, but they had become too established institutions for him to be able to repress them very successfully. Nor was Mrs Perkins a woman easy of repression: if you were not awed by her superior size, you could hardly fail to succumb before the tremendous courtliness of her manner. If you did not yield to her glance, you went down instantly before her smile. Besides, she had had some experience in fascination. Three husbands had, in turn, led Mrs Perkins to the altar: she had, in turn, mourned them all; was now 'alone again in the world,' as she phrased it; and yet not much the worse for her troubles—still smiling and velveted, singing and ringleted, feathered and jewelled. She had made two or three voyages to India, and her house was consequently crowded with Indian, and Chinese, and Japanese marvels. She was a first-rate hand at a curry, and took her tumbler of brandy-pawnee every night before she went to bed, with a regularity said by her intimates to have been acquired in the jungle. She was good-natured enough in her way, which was rather of the violent and impetuous; had a strong, hearty, man's laugh, which she never

dreamed of sparing; a wonderful passion for brilliant costume; a strong affection for her only daughter (Amelia, or 'Mely,' as she called her); and a great respect for Mr Jellicoe. I fancy that of old there had been severe contests for supremacy between Mrs Perkins and her son-in-law, and that some vigorous line of action on his part, ending in the defeat of the lady with great loss, had won for him her veneration and submission thenceforth. He was too good-natured to be severe in his victory, and so Mrs Perkins was always hospitably entertained, and welcomed, and humoured by her 'children,' as she called them, although Jellicoe had prohibited peremptorily all interference in the affairs of his household.

'Well, Mely, love, how are you?' asked Mrs Perkins, as she stepped out of the fly, which, by the by, tilted and sloped very much as she did so, for I can tell you she weighed a trifle. She was proud of her foot, and it was small for her size—fat women, I notice, often are proud of their feet—and her boots were certainly visible, plainly visible, as she mounted the steps of Mr Jellicoe's house.

'How's J.? All right? Give us a kiss, Mely. You look pale, my chick. How are the children? Well? That's all right. Yes, I'll have a glass of sherry and a crust. Coachman! Baylis!' and she screamed out to her charioteer—'you can go to the public-house, if you like. I shall stop here an hour.'

Baylis availed himself of this gracious permission. Mrs Perkins took what she called 'a glass of sherry and a crust,' which really consisted of three glasses of sherry, a plentiful supply of cold roast beef, and a bottle of Guinness; but perhaps she only intended to speak generally.

'Pa's very cross,' said Amelia. 'I don't know what to make of him.'

'Is he, though? Have some Guinness, Mely? Do; it will do you good.'

I think if one could have arrived at Mrs Perkins's notion of a really enjoyable afternoon, it would have consisted, firstly, in a plentiful lunch; and secondly, in a prolonged career of shopping afterwards. She always dressed magnificently on these occasions; and the way in which she sailed into shops, always proceeding to quite the far end of them, nearly swamping the minor customers she passed in her progress—her grand manner to the shopkeeper, and the courtesy with which she inspected his wares—now awarding her sovereign approval, and now her sovereign contempt: these were, indeed, fine things to see. Certainly the trouble she gave was not always proportioned to the value of her purchases. But it is to be presumed that something of the enjoyment she experienced was imparted to the merchants she traded with; at least, they evinced no disinclination to obey the mandates of Mrs Perkins.

'I want a new bonnet, and a new mantle, and gloves and boots, and ever so many things. Come along, Mely. Here's Baylis. We'll have a nice long afternoon's shopping.'

And the two ladies drove off.

Miss Burke, rather heated from a long educational struggle with her three charges, and having heard 'Missy' gaspingly perform on the piano the beautiful melody, *In a Cottage*, amid the jeers of her brothers, escorted her pupils on a customary constitutional parade in Kensington Gardens.

Mr Jellicoe was cross when he went away; there can be no doubt of that from Mrs Jellicoe's point of view. He was no better when he came home again. Mrs Jellicoe thought him very much worse. 'Can James have been speculating?' she asked herself. 'Things must have gone very wrong indeed in the city.' Certainly, about this time, city articles in morning newspapers described money as being tight, and a feeling of uneasiness as being prevalent. There had been a tremendous fall, too, in Connecticut

junctions, in which it was believed that Jellicoe had an interest; and the directors of the Wheal Polly Mine, it was said, had refused Jellicoe's application for an allotment. Of course, I speak with diffidence of Mr Jellicoe's business doings; to outsiders, all crafts appear inscrutable and mysterious. I only know that Mr Jellicoe was always to be seen running actively about in Throgmorton Street, with his hat rather off his head, a pen in one hand, and a slip of paper in the other. No doubt, this was all as it should be, and he was getting through a great deal of work, although he was very much more out of his office than in it. But it was evidently not only business matters that weighed heavily upon Mr Jellicoe, if, indeed, they weighed at all. Mrs Jellicoe had been detained rather late in her shopping; was not dressed in time for dinner; and both Mr Jellicoe and the dinner had had to wait. Notwithstanding, the codfish was underdone. All this was provoking; but above all, or rather, under all, was the old grievance of the mistake in Mrs Jellicoe's accounts. Mr Jellicoe had not forgotten that, and Mrs Jellicoe knew that he had not. As for Mrs Perkins, to do justice to her astuteness, she perceived at once that, as she expressed it, 'J. was as cross as two sticks,' and accordingly declined a reluctant invitation to dinner, and gave orders to Baylis to drive home.

Mrs Jellicoe was discomposed at breakfast, but she was even more seriously disturbed at dinner. She hardly ventured to address any remark to her husband; occasionally, she looked towards him, but only abstractedly. She ate sparingly, sometimes laying down her fork altogether for some minutes, then resuming it hurriedly. Mr Jellicoe could not fail to notice a strangeness in her manner. He was a heavy, rather obstinate man, but he was not unkind. 'Are you ill, Amelia?' he asked.

'No, James; thank you.'

He went on with the sherry, for which his table was so justly celebrated. He had paid his wife the attention of asking after her health, and considering the mood he was in, it was perhaps all that could be expected of him. 'This cannot be only the mistake in the housekeeping-book,' she said, and he continued his dinner. Running about in Throgmorton Street, it seemed, was provocative of appetite.

There was a knock at the door. Mrs Jellicoe started.

'What's that?' asked Mr Jellicoe.

'Only a parcel, I think, James,' said Mrs Jellicoe in a meek explanatory voice.

'Who for?'

'Really, James, I—I don't know. How should I know?' Mrs Jellicoe was mildly defiant.

'Amelia, I wish to know.'

At this juncture Parker, the parlour-maid, put her head in at the door and said: 'Please, sir, it's for me, sir.'

She must have been listening, I should think, or else she acted in pursuance of instructions. Mr Jellicoe was silenced, but not satisfied; Mrs Jellicoe partly relieved, but not wholly comfortable. Missy and the Rob Roys came in for dessert; their reception was not enthusiastic.

'O pa,' cries Totty, 'dere's a man in back-parlour.'

'Nonsense, Totty,' says mamma.

'What does the child mean?' asks Jellicoe.

'It's absurd, but I'll go and see.'

Jellicoe was not prepared for sudden action on the part of Amelia, or perhaps he would have stopped her. She left the room. Jellicoe told the Rob Roys not to make so much noise, and listened. He thought he heard voices in the back-parlour. He rose to go out after his wife. Then he heard the street-door shut, and in a minute Amelia returned, rather pale, but rubbing her white plump hands together with an affected cheerfulness and unconcern.

'It was nobody—it was nothing!'

Jellicoe looked angry, puzzled, and incredulous. Totty was busy with almonds and raisins; the Rob Roys were hard at work devouring oranges gleefully. The olive-branches were soon dismissed to bed, rather abruptly. Totty's offer to rehearse her poetry was declined scornfully. The evening promised to be very sombre indeed.

'Who was in the back-parlour?' asked Mr Jellicoe.

Amelia paused, and looked at him; he was very angry, but she seemed to take heart rather from that.

'No one!' she said stoutly. Of course, that was not true; they both knew that; but she was determined to stop discussion on the threshold, and she adopted that improper mode of doing so. She rang for tea.

'Shall I go on reading *The Wrecker's Wife*?' she said as she took a volume from a side-table.

'No!'

'Will you read it, James?'

'No!' He thrust the book away from him angrily. He was in a great rage. The Jellicoes had never, since they were married, had so black an evening.

There was division between Mr and Mrs Jellicoe—distrust and division. It was a new feeling to both of them; and to do them justice, they neither of them liked it. In a prosaic and homely, but certainly in a strong and solid way, they had entertained most strong affection for each other. Jellicoe was not so absorbed by the money-market and city intelligence but that he had great love for his wife, and his children, and his home; and Amelia, with all her stout placidity, her well-dressed self-possession, and consciousness of dignity and comeliness, had much affection for Jellicoe. If he had been ill, she would have nursed him day and night; poor, she would have toiled at his side, or slaved for both of them and the children too. She would have gone to the world's end at his bidding. This was in her, I really believe, had occasion required it. But now a thick wall of separation was rising between them; and each hour of their silence and estrangement seemed to add a fresh stone to that wall, and to make reconciliation and restoration of affection more and more difficult.

A most doleful breakfast succeeded that night of melancholy. At an early stage of it, Totty was dismissed the table for not being good, or otherwise for being too conversational for the silent moods of papa and mamma. It was a dreadful thing when Jellicoe left his house for the city, without bestowing on Amelia the usual kiss at parting. It had often degenerated, that little tenderness, into a tepid performance of a ceremonial. Custom, perhaps, had staled its romance, but still it was typical of past gallantry and affection, and its pretermission now seemed very sad and cruel indeed. Amelia had something very like genuine hysterics when she was alone, and Jellicoe complained in the omnibus, all the way to the Bank, of having a fly in his eye. His omnibus friends thought him moody and morose; old Crocker, the indigo-merchant, openly prescribed for him blue pill. Certainly his glance was dull, his gait unelastic, and his speech curt. He found nothing to amuse him in his newspaper: his eye first fell on an impassioned advertisement, in which a distressed husband appeared to be conjuring a fugitive wife—appealed to under the affectionate title of 'Pussy'—to return and be forgiven; he next found himself perusing some painful matrimonial law-reports; and then he was struck by a case, brought before Mr Bingham, in which an old acquaintance, 'the brute in human form,' was charged with the return of his old complaint, of wife-beating. Mr Jellicoe thrust away his newspaper abruptly. At that moment, I think his views regarding marriage must have been, to use one of his own phrases, rather below par. But 'business is business,' and he was soon running about Throgmorton Street as actively as any broker in that locality.

Mrs Jellicoe, too, recovered herself. She had an

interview with Miss Burke touching the educational successes of the Rob Roys, and listened to an effective performance by Totty of *In a Cottage*. She then took lunch at the children's dinner; wrote a letter to Mrs Perkins, who occupied a small house near the Kensington gravel-pits; was 'not at home' when Mrs, Miss, and Miss Sophia Meeker called to pay a state visit; and then went for a little walk with Totty down the Notting Hill Road. But the dinner was but a repetition of the meal of the previous day—solemn and sad. Mr Jellicoe seemed bent upon ignoring altogether the presence of his wife; he never once addressed her, and after dinner, occupied himself in the examination of a bundle of papers he had brought home with him from the city.

The evening post brought a letter from Mrs Perkins to Mrs Jellicoe, who read it with evident annoyance and disappointment, and then placed the missive in her pocket. Still more to recall the transactions of the previous night, there was heard also a similar single knock at the door. Mrs Jellicoe left the room precipitately. Talking was now evidently to be heard in the hall. As though acting upon some pre-arranged principle, Mr Jellicoe, this time, made no stir, did not rise from the table, did not appear to listen. He was intently occupied with his papers. There was quiet at last; the street-door was heard to close, and Mrs Jellicoe re-entered, pale and angry, looking perhaps frightened a little too. All that night and the next morning, the dreadful state of siege, as between Mr and Mrs Jellicoe, continued.

The morrow brought Mrs Perkins, driven by Baylis.

'I'm so sorry, so sorry,' cried that lady, as she entered the dining-room—with an eye towards the cellar, I think—'but I'm quite bankrupt; I shan't get my dividends for another month, and I haven't a rap, Mely.' Mrs Perkins was accustomed to indulge in forcible language.

'What shall I do?' asked Mrs Jellicoe.

'Is he cross still?' Mrs Jellicoe nodded her head mournfully and affirmatively.

'You've your jewels?'

Mrs Jellicoe shook her head mournfully and negatively.

'You've the plate?'

Mrs Jellicoe paused, and looked towards her parent with a puzzled expression. That lady stooped down and whispered in Amelia's ear—I am not quite sure of the word—but it was either 'pawn,' or an even less refined equivalent.

'No, mother, I will not,' said Mrs Jellicoe, resolutely.

Mr Jellicoe returned home from the city a little before his usual time. Entering the drawing-room suddenly, he found his wife occupied in the perusal of a letter, or what appeared to be a letter, which, at his approach, she thrust rather alarmedly under the sofa cushion. He contrived to prevent her regaining the secret document. He lingered about the sofa. The first dinner-bell rang, and Mrs Jellicoe was reluctantly compelled to withdraw to prepare for that entertainment. Mr Jellicoe secured the letter. He brightened a little as he glanced at it.

'A clue!' he said, and he put it in his pocket.

He went up stairs to his dressing-room: on the landing was Mrs Jellicoe. There was an expression of shame and penitence upon her face that was decidedly touching.

'O James!' she said, and she advanced towards him.

'Well, what is it?' He spoke gruffly. He was not a man easily melted.

'I am afraid I've been very foolish.'

'I daresay you have.'

But she had made up her mind, you see; she was not to be put down by his gruffness; she laid her plump white hands upon his arms.

'Very foolish—very wrong—very wicked!' And the plump white hands crept up to his shoulders.

She looked humbled, almost exaggeratedly so. He suffered himself to be led into a small room, which usually went by the name of Mrs Jellicoe's boudoir. On the floor was a confused heap of brown paper parcels, large and small, some rent open, some yet corded. Mrs Jellicoe waved her hands towards the parcels.

'James, I've been so foolish.'

Her pocket-handkerchief was produced; her voice broke, and tears dropped down the plump, substantial matronly cheeks. Mr Jellicoe was moved, but he turned away his glance from his wife, for he had a duty to perform. He produced from his pocket the paper he had taken from beneath the sofa cushion, and commenced to read aloud :

'Important news from America! Alarming fire in Halifax, Nova Scotia! Damages estimated at a million dollars! A vast conflux of goods thus subjected to the unrelenting process of the most urgent and illimitable forced sales! Messrs Towzer and Sons of Wigborne Street, Portman Square, have been instructed to sell absolutely and immediately the following superb property! By peremptory desire! Leviathan Sale.—N.B. At any sacrifice, they must, they are bound to sell.'

'And you have been duped by such stuff as this, Amelia!' and he went on. 'Richest Moire Antiques! Black French Glacé Duccas! Lyon Brocaded Silks! Persian Chenilles! Elegant Mohairs! Furs and Peltrey! Magnificent India Gauze and French Sylphide Long Barré Shawls, shipped at L.4, 10s., only 11s. 6d. each! Solferino Cashmere Robes, a right elegant novelty, shipped at L.3, 15s., only 9s. 6d., full length!'

'How much do you owe Messrs Towzer, Amelia?'

A voice husky with penitence and sobs answered : 'Twenty pounds, James!'

James groaned aloud. He kicked open a parcel.

'What's that?'

The voice behind the handkerchief whispered : 'A brocaded silk!'

Mr Jellicoe read out :

'A grand unparagoned St Etienne brocaded silk flounced robe, the purest and most graceful arrangement, shipped at L.15, 10s. only L.5, 19s. 6½d.'—Mrs Jellicoe, business is business, and truth is truth. You're a stout woman—eighteen yards will make a good full dress for you—fifteen, a scanty one. Measure that dress; if there's more than ten yards, I'm a Dutchman.'

Tremblingly Mrs Jellicoe produced a ribbon-yard measure, and obeyed. The silk measured nine yards and a half. James was triumphant, Amelia very contrite. He disturbed another parcel.

'What's that?' he cried.

Amelia, frightened, screamed in explanation : 'O James, it was so cheap—only 9s. 6d.'

'Amelia, I did not expect this,' and he kicked with his foot another purchase of Mrs Jellicoe's—a bargain—a widow's cap!

'O James, forgive me; I did not mean anything.' She was on her knees trying to grasp his hands.

Parker tripped in. 'Please m', the man's called again. Oh, I did not know master was here,' and she tripped out again.

'Tell me one thing, Amelia: Mrs Perkins went with you?'

'Yes.'

'Remember! this is the very last shopping expedition. You'll deal in future at Old Brown's in Bishopsgate Street, who'll supply you with everything you want, under my instructions and approval. Now, I'll see this man.'

Mr Jellicoe went down stairs. He found a glossily dressed, pomatummed, whiskered individual, bowing obsequiously, in the back-parlour.

'Our firm has sent again for the money. I called last night, and the night before. It really ain't usual.'

'I don't want the goods,' said Mr Jellicoe, stoutly,

'and what's more, I won't have them.'

'Our firm really ain't accustomed'

'I don't want any discussion. I keep one article, the widow's cap. I'll pay for that now. Here's six-pence, a threepenny bit, and a half-penny. I believe 9s. is the figure. I don't care about a receipt.'

'Oh, this here's chaff.'

'Look here: don't flurry yourself. I'm a man of my word. I won't have your goods. I know a thing or two about Messrs Towzer and Son, and so do the magistrates in Marlborough Street. I warn you, if, in a quarter of an hour, you and your goods are not off my premises, why, I'll throw them out of window—I'll kick you into the road—and I'll send a policeman after Messrs Towzer and Son. Do you hear?'

Mr Jellicoe strode out of the room looking every bit like a man who would keep his word. Somehow, the emissary of Messrs Towzers seemed to think so too. In ten minutes, he had vacated Mr Jellicoe's house, taking with him Mrs Jellicoe's rash bargains, with the one exception.

The dinner was cold—it had been kept waiting some time—but it was eaten with greater relish by the Jellicoes than any meal of the last two days. Good humour was being re-established.

'James, I'm very sorry. You're not angry with me now?'

'No, Amelia,' and he kissed her heartily. 'Only, never shop any more with my mother-in-law—never buy bargains. Get Bob—I am sure he's old enough now—to help you in adding up the housekeeping-book. I'll allow a larger margin for sundries; and I am sure you can make it come right in future, if you try.'

'And the widow's cap—you won't keep that, James; let me burn it.'

'It shall be your next birthday present, Amelia, if you deserve it.'

She did deserve it, and she got it: and there was an end of Mrs Jellicoe's mistakes.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE POOR IS THEIR POVERTY.'

I HAVE often heard this saying break, as it were, from the heart of a poor man, when some unhappy circumstance brought home to him the difficulties of his position. It is affecting to hear such an exclamation from a perhaps worthy and meritorious fellow-creature; and sometimes the idea involved in it may be productive of wide-spread feelings by no means comfortable for the community. Let me try if I cannot put the matter on such a footing as to give comfort to both the poor and rich.

If we study to analyse the contrasted conditions of the poor and rich—of the labouring-man, we shall say, and the employer of labour—we shall find that the difference lies mainly here, namely, that the labourer has but himself, his bare self, his hands, his strength, and his intellect, to work for him, while the employer, besides all this, has something else, namely, money, and through money, a command of materials and the labour of others, to work for him—a multiplication, as it may be called, of the means at the service of his less fortunate brother. It so happens, too, that the man possessed of capital is thereby enabled to become richer and richer, at a constantly increasing ratio, while the poor man remains stationary; thus causing the contrast between the two to become always greater and greater. So also will it be, to some extent, even with the intelligence and moral force of the two men, for, while the employer rises as a moral and intellectual being with the sense of extended power, and the discipline he acquires from the dealing with large undertakings, the labourer

stands still in these respects, able only to ignorantly wonder and chafe at the great advantages which he sees falling to the share of one whom he thinks in essential respects no better than himself. And how is this multiplied means to be obtained by the poor or labouring man, so that he may partake of the advantages of his neighbour? Obviously, only by his storing up something out of the results of his labour, by his not eating up all, day by day, that he works for. This has been the beginning or origin of all capital, and there is no other way of creating it. The first steps are the most difficult, and it is there that the force of the adage lies—The destruction of the poor is their poverty. It is naturally most difficult to spare from a small income, because needs are there at the greatest in proportion to means; but such is the order of Providence in many other things; for example, it is more difficult to clear and till a field in a new than an old country—it is more difficult for an ignorant than for a cultivated man to learn anything. Perhaps God meant this for a trial and a discipline to our faculties, and there is probably some great general good derived from it. Anyhow, there is the fact lying indisputable before us, that matters do stand so. It is for us to make the best of them.

Thousands upon thousands are, of course, every day encountering this difficulty, with the stout hearts and the patient self-denial that are necessary; and thousands upon thousands are every day seen, to some extent, realising the good results that are promised to all such efforts. It is a most interesting problem to watch. A country mason has been working for wages during several years. He has saved a few pounds. He undertakes the building of a cottage or a stone-fence, having wherewithal to buy part of the materials, and engage two assistants. Gaining something from the job, he can undertake the building of a bigger house, a more extensive wall, next time. He has greater profits from this, and so he goes on till, in four or five years, you see him established as a master builder, with a family nicely housed and dressed, and everything handsome about him. Such a man is often envied and sneered at as worldly: possibly, there may have been a little worldliness in him; but, on the whole, there is generally a moral advance in such cases, as might indeed be reasonably expected, for in the self-denial involved in the first efforts at sparing, and in the consequent self-control acquired, there lies some virtue. Our mason is but the type of an enormous class of men throughout our industrious community—self-raised men, men who at first had but their hands to work for them, but afterwards were able, by sparing from the needs of the hour, to acquire the means of multiplying their powers, and at the same time to advance as moral and intellectual beings.

What men have done, men may do. What has been done once, may be done again. It is not always that even men of good abilities will find opportunities of employing savings to good mercantile advantage, so as to raise themselves greatly above their original condition. But there is not any case in which a man will not be benefited one way or another by a little store. Every penny saved is a tooth drawn out of the soul-oppressing adage, The destruction of the poor is their poverty. In our present mercantile polity, there is more than the necessary difficulty of employing small savings to profit; but this is susceptible of change for the better, and change may be looked for. Even now, the working-classes may employ savings in hundreds of ways advantageous to themselves for further saving, or for positive gain. For example, they may combine to get the chief necessities of life at wholesale prices, and so save from ten to twenty per cent. Some have had the energy to start trades and factories on their own account, and with no lack of success, as I have been

assured. That is a path in which many more may walk. The cleverness and pertinacity which we often see them expending in struggles with employers for impossible objects, would suffice to convert large groups of workmen into guilds of masters. There is in this country no avenue of success closed against any department of the community. But even though the talent should have to be deposited at a small interest in a savings' bank, it would still be a wholesome and most useful addition to the natural powers and defences of the man possessing it. It would still, in that form, be to a certain degree a protection against the crushing force of the adage, The destruction of the poor is their poverty.

One is sometimes disposed to look on Mr Bareman's case in this world as a very hard and sad one, and indeed to feel that the whole scene of the world is one of dismal inequality and partiality. But it is needless, perhaps something worse, to complain of it. It is a system of contention, designed, to all appearance, for the evocation of the active play of our faculties, and perhaps no other would have served such good ends. Let Mr Bareman grapple with the natural difficulties of his situation, and he will find himself all the better for the good fight he has fought. If, after his success, he turns an eye of sympathy on his still struggling fellow, and holds out a helping-hand to him, he will find himself made still better, in the depths of his heart and soul, by the sacrifice he makes. Such are moral goods obviously derived from the inequality of the conditions of men. So, perhaps what looks at first like a system of contention, is, after all, a principle needful to the social union.

PREACHING IN THE FAR WEST.

THE same contrariety that leads cripples to become porters and walking postmen, and deaf men to fill the situation of Boots at our inns, has not seldom imbued blind persons with a passion for travel. Over the last class, the Rev. William Henry Milburn, of the United States, may certainly claim present pre-eminence. He is not, indeed, altogether sightless: the right eye retains the smallest possible transparent spot, not much larger than a pin's point, in the corner of the pupil, through which the light may make its way; 'though, to make this fraction of an eye available, it is necessary to use a shade above the eye, and to place the middle finger of the right hand beneath it, thus forming a sort of artificial pupil, allowing only the due quantity of light to enter.' Nevertheless, since, before his accident (which was occasioned by an oyster-shell thrown by a school companion), he had fortunately learned to read, he became, under these disadvantageous circumstances, a greedy devourer of books, and an accomplished student of the university of Illinois; an *alma mater* which may boast, with truth, of the rare virtue of never having conferred the title of D.D. on any unworthy object, inasmuch as throughout its five-and-twenty years' existence, it has never had occasion to confer it at all.

The Milburns were driven from Philadelphia by commercial shipwreck in 1837, and of course found the capital of the Far West to be a great deal cheaper place to live in. Some of the aborigines, however, complained, it seems, of its prices, low as they were, and were thus, in Mr Milburn's hearing, reproved by a female eggseller: 'What! do ye suppose our hens are gwine to strain theirselves a-laying eggs at three cents a dozen? Lay 'em yourself, and see how you'd like the price.' Although, indeed, he could not see very well, the author of *Ten Years of Preacher-life** had powers of observation greater than those of most men with perfect eyes, and suffered absolutely nothing

to escape his ears. Having embraced the profession of a preacher in the Wesleyan Methodist connection, he was appointed to the Winchester circuit, consisting of some thirty preaching-places—some of them chapels, more of them log-schoolhouses, most of them private dwellings—at an average of some ten miles apart. He had to preach a sermon a day, and make this three-hundred-mile round thirteen times a year. Thus he got acquainted with almost every man, woman, and child within his beat, and had a school open to him for studying human nature which he would scarcely have found elsewhere. That privilege, however, seems to have formed his principal reward, since of pecuniary recompense he had only four hundred dollars *per annum*. We do not wonder that, with such a miserable stipend, a young man in the same position as himself—a ‘helper’ in the ministry—was once convicted at the quarterly Conference of the practice of ‘swapping horses,’ in order to make both ends meet. All the charges against this juvenile preacher were characteristically rebuffed. ‘First, that he could not preach; second, that he was attentive to all the girls around the circuit; and third, that he was constantly engaged in swapping horses. In defending himself, he stated, first, that he knew, as well as any of them, that he could not preach, and he was sure it did not trouble them as much as it did him; second, that they need not be alarmed about his attention to the girls, for he would not think of marrying the daughter of any man present; and third, as to trading horses, what else was he to do? they paid him nothing, and he had no other way of making money enough to buy his clothes.’

The discipline of this Western Church is rather rough when compared with that of Oxford and Cambridge, and the method of imparting the art of extempore preaching seems somewhat analogous to that of teaching our dogs to swim. The neophyte was ‘chucked in,’ and had to land himself how he could in this fashion. ‘William, exhort!’ cried the presiding elder quite unexpectedly, one meeting-night, to our young author, who had never before opened his mouth in public. ‘I had no resource but to stand up, frightened as I was almost to death, behind my split-bottom chair, in lieu of a pulpit, in front of the huge fireplace, and attempt to speak by the light of the smouldering embers, and one or two candles fast sinking to their sockets, to the crowd of hunters and farmers filling the cabin, who gaped and stared at a pallid, beardless boy. Of course, words were few, and ideas fewer, and on resuming my seat, I had the uncomfortable impression that that congregation had listened to about as poor a discourse as ever was delivered. Such was my first attempt at preaching.’

The bishops of this community, although much respected, seem to obtain by no means an unswerving obedience from their subordinates. One of these was explaining to his diocesan that he practised medicine (which had been made a ground of complaint against him) only for the good of his flock. ‘Now, Mr Bishop, you know that we are commanded to do good to the bodies as well as the souls of men. If I were travelling in a region where doctors were scarce, and were to find a man in a bad spell of bilious fever, ye know I would throw him into a sweat, and then give him a dose of lobelia or thoroughwort’—

“No, sir,” interrupted the bishop rather haughtily; “no, brother, I do not know, and, what is more, I do not care, what you would do.”

“Very well, sir, very well,” retorted the other; “you have as good a right to live and die a fool as any other man.”

Another preacher, remarkable for his humour as well as his godliness, was reproved by his superior for indulging in such drollery as set the sober Methodist Conference in a roar. ‘Brother,’ inquired he in a monitory tone, ‘do you think you are growing in grace?’

‘Yes, bishop,’ was the reply; ‘I think I am, *in spots*’

This man was no less than the celebrated Peter Cartwright, an apostle exactly fitted for those scenes wherein he wrought his mission out so well.

‘He had then been a backwoods preacher for nearly forty years, ranging the country from the Lakes to the Gulf, and from the Alleghanies to the Mississippi. He was inured to every form of hardship, and had looked calmly at peril of every kind—the tomahawk of the Indian, the spring of the panther, the hug of the bear, the sweep of the tornado, the rush of swollen torrents, and the fearful chasm of the earthquake. He had lain in the canebrake, and made his bed upon the snow of the prairie and on the oozy soil of the swamp, and had wandered hunger-bitten amid the solitude of mountains. He had been in jeopardy among robbers, and in danger from desperadoes, who had sworn to take his life. He had preached in the cabin of the slave, and in the mansion of the master; to the Indians, and to the men of the border. He had taken his life in his hand, and ridden in the path of whizzing bullets, that he might proclaim peace. He had stood on the outskirts of civilisation, and welcomed the first comers to the woods and prairies. At the command of Him who said: “Go into all the world,” he had roamed through the wilderness; as a disciple of the man who said: “The world is my parish,” his travels had equalled the limits of an empire. All this he had done without hope of fee or reward; not to enrich himself or his posterity, but as a preacher of righteousness in the service of God and of his fellow-men. Everywhere he had confronted wickedness, and rebuked it; every form of vice had shrunk abashed from his irresistible sarcasm and ridicule, or quivered beneath the fiery look of his indignant invective.’

This was a hero whom no church—and indeed no man worth his salt—would venture to despise or make light of; and since he had the thews of Anak, it would have been a dangerous thing to do so. He, on his part, was by no means wanting in the exaction of such respect as was due to him. A room had once been reserved for him at the Irving House, in New York; but having arrived there late at night, the sleepy hotel clerk did not recognise his name in the somewhat illegible characters which the backwoodsman inscribed in the register-book, nor Cartwright himself in the farmer-like-looking man before him. The great preacher was therefore lodged very high up, and immediately under the tiles.

The patronising servant explained to the traveller the use of the various articles in the room, and said, on leaving, pointing to the bell-rope: “If you want anything, you can just pull that, and somebody will come up.”

The old gentleman waited until the servant had had time to descend, and then gave the rope a furious jerk. Up came the servant, bounding two or three steps at a time, and was amazed at the reply in answer to his “What will you have, sir?”

“How are you all coming on down below? It is such a way from here to there, that a body can have no notion even of the weather where you are.”

The servant assured him that all was going on well, and was dismissed; but had scarcely reached the office before another strenuous pull at the bell was given. The bell in the City Hall had struck a fire-alarm, and the firemen, with their apparatus, were hurrying, with confused noises, along the street.

“What’s wanting, sir?” said the irritated servant. “What’s all this hulla-baloo?” said the stranger.

“Only a fire, sir.”

“A fire, sir!” shouted the other. Do you want us all to be burned up?” knowing well enough the fire was not on the premises.

“The servant assured him of the distance of the conflagration, and that all was safe, and again descended. A third furious pull at the bell, and the

almost breathless servant again made his appearance at the door.

"Bring me a hatchet," said the traveller in a peremptory tone.

"A hatchet, sir!" said the astonished waiter.

"Yes, a hatchet."

"What for, sir?"

"That's none of your business: go and fetch me a hatchet."

The servant descended, and informed the clerk that, in his private opinion, that old chap was crazy, and that he meant to commit suicide, or to kill some one in the house, for that he wanted a hatchet.

The clerk, with some trepidation, ventured to the room beneath the leads, and having presented himself, said, in his blankest tone, "I beg your pardon, sir, but what was it you wanted?"

"A hatchet," said the imperious stranger.

"A hatchet, sir, really; but what for?" said the other.

"What for? Why, look here, stranger. You see I'm not accustomed to these big houses, and it's such a journey from this to where you are, that I thought I might get lost. Now, it is my custom, when I am in a strange country, to blaze my way. We cut notches in the trees, and call that blazing, and we can then always find our way back again. So I thought if I had a hatchet, I'd just go out and blaze the corners from this to your place, and then I would be able to find my way back."

"I beg your pardon," said the mystified clerk; "but what's your name, sir? I could not read it very well on the book."

"My name," replied the other—"certainly; my debts are all paid, and my will is made—my name is Peter Cartwright, at your service."

"O Mr Cartwright," responded the other, "I beg you ten thousand pardons. We have a room for you, sir, on the second floor—the best room in the house. This way, sir, if you please."

"All right," said the old gentleman; "that's all I wanted."

Mr Milburn's modesty causes him to dwell in general upon the doings of others rather than of himself, but one very remarkable and praiseworthy act of his he is obliged to tell. It happened that our author had been appointed agent to collect subscriptions for a certain good work, by the Conference, but without any salary save ten per cent. of what he might get out of the pockets of the benevolent. As what he got, however, was nothing, the ten per cent. was not worth speaking of, and on one occasion he found himself on board a Cincinnati steam-boat absolutely without a single cent in his pocket. In the same company were several eminent members of Congress, who played cards night and day, drank immoderately, and swore in a manner to rasp the good preacher's ears considerably. Accordingly, when a fog came on, which prevented passengers landing to spend the Sabbath, and Mr Milburn was asked to preach, he concluded his discourse to a numerous congregation of a far higher grade than he had been accustomed to address, with the most fearless denunciations of this unseemly conduct.

"I must tell you that, as an American citizen, I feel disgraced by your behaviour; as a preacher of the gospel, I am commissioned to tell you that, unless you renounce your evil courses, repent of your sins, and believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ with hearts unto righteousness, you will certainly be damned!"

While cogitating in his state-cabin over the bomb-shell he had just been casting, there was a tap at the door. A gentleman entered, who said: "I have been requested to wait upon you by the members of Congress on board, who have had a meeting since the close of the religious exercises. They desire me to present you with this purse of money—handing me between fifty and a hundred dollars—as a token of

their appreciation of your sincerity and fearlessness in reproofing them for their misconduct; they have also desired me to ask if you will allow your name to be used at the coming election of chaplain for Congress. If you will consent to this, they are ready to assure you an honourable election."

No political appointment, perhaps, was ever earned more honourably than this. It is the more to be wondered at, that so brave a man as Milburn dare not speak what must certainly be his sentiments concerning Slavery. He is content to urge the right of persons of colour to be instructed in the Christian religion, and there to stop. Indeed, he takes an almost malicious pleasure in reciting the following experience of his own of what may be expected of a free nigger in the way of gratitude. In crossing the Alleghanies from Chambersburg, eight passengers had been allotted to the stage wherein he was about to travel.

An old coloured woman was anxious to be the ninth, but objection had been raised. She declared, with tears in her eyes, that she had been waiting for several days to get a seat; that although she had her ticket, they had been unable to carry her, the stages having been crowded with through-passengers; that now her money was spent, and she must get home to her daughter. A stout Missourian, who was to be of our company, swore roundly that he "wouldn't ride with a nigger, and that she shouldn't go." Touched by the old woman's condition, I said to him quietly: "My friend, what right have you to interfere? Her ticket is as good as yours, and she has as much right to a seat as you have." "No," he said; "she is a nigger, and I am white; and I'll whip any man that says she has as good a right to a seat as I have, or insists upon taking her along." "Then," said I, "you can whip me, for I say she shall go." The idea of a giant whipping a pigny was too preposterous. It raised a laugh against him, and he submitted, because ridicule was more potent than reason. . . . I tried to take good care of my protégée, giving her money to provide food at our various halts, and in every way sought to promote her comfort. As we went rattling down the streets of Pittsburgh, late in the second night, I threw open the curtain on my side of the coach, and sat looking out into the night, through which the street-lamps struggled with their feeble rays, my thoughts divided between the indefinable curiosity and awe one always experiences in entering a strange city late at night, and the prospect of a good bed and a quiet hotel, when I was suddenly roused from my reverie by a violent blow on my side, delivered by my old dame, as she screamed in anger: "Lean up! lean up! what you takin' all de winder for? Don't you suppose pussons ob culler hab dere rites as well as you good-for-nothing whites? I wants to see de scenery too." I believe it was the verdict of my fellow-passengers that I received what I deserved.

There is neither rectory-house nor manse for the travelling-preacher of Illinois: he depends solely upon the native hospitality or Christian feeling of the inhabitants of that scantily populated region, and rarely fails to find a ready, though often rough accommodation. Nevertheless, it seems scarcely a tour to take one's wife in the honeymoon, as the Rev. William Henry Milburn did, rather, as we should think, to the lady's astonishment. Upon arriving at a settlement, his custom was to tell the driver to take them to the door of the Methodist who lived in the largest and most comfortable dwelling.

"Halloo the house," cried I. "Halloo yourself; what do you want?" was the reply. "I am travelling with my wife, and learning that the quarters at the hotel are bad, have come to get some supper, and spend a part of the night with you." As I said this, I was making the word good by getting out of the wagon. The man of the house came striding

towards the gate, saying in an angry tone : "Look here, stranger, we don't keep a tavern ; and if you're a traveller, you must put up with traveller's fare, and go to the hotel." "Don't be so savage," said I ; "have you never heard the saying, 'Be not forgetful to entertain strangers ; for some have thereby entertained angels unawares.' " "O ho," said he, "that sounds like preaching ; you ain't a preacher, are you ?" I intimated that I was, and mentioned my name. Eyeing me from head to foot, he exclaimed : "Well, I never ! Who would have taken such a poor, little, dried-up specimen as you for him !"

At two in the morning, the happy pair were again seated in their miserable wagon, 'with no protection from the driving rain but a tow linen cover, through which the water dripped in showers. We had been overtaken by a furious equinoctial storm, which began about midnight, and our plight was pitiable enough. The temperature had fallen about forty degrees ; the night was pitchy dark, only relieved by frequent flashes of lightning, most vivid, and sometimes appalling, instantly followed by sharp and stunning reports of thunder. But the flashes helped to light our driver on his way, or would have done so, had they not shewed the whole prairie a pool of water. After a time, we reached a little belt of timber, indicating our approach to a creek. As we crossed the bridge, we heard the now swollen torrent rushing through a deep ravine, when the broad glare revealed our position.

"By Jove !" shouted the driver with glee, "weren't that lucky ? a half-minute more, and we'd have been all smashed. I never was so near goin' over a bridge ; half an inch more, and we'd been over, and then salt wouldn't have saved us." To the rather timid question of my wife as to whether there were any more bad bridges to cross before daylight, he replied : "O yes, severals ; but you mustn't be skeered ; we must all die some time, you know !"

Surely not even the most 'muscular Christian' woman could be expected to like journeys of this kind ; and, indeed, however glorious may be the state of matrimony for a divine in Great Britain, we can scarcely think it suited to peripatetic theologians in the Far West. We ourselves, however, are all gratitude to Mr Milburn for having experienced these adventures which he has described so well. He has not only aroused in us a warm personal interest in himself, but a sincere respect for that hard-working and enthusiastic body of men of which he is a member. The hardships which they undergo, however, are endured with their eyes open, while our unfortunate author scarce knew whither he rode, he was so blind.

I therefore set to work to educate my senses, thinking that if an Arab, an Indian, or a half-savage backwoodsman, could bring his perceptions to such precision, keenness, and delicacy, why might not I ? It became a matter of pride to conceal my defective vision, to make up for the want of eyesight by the superior activity of the other faculties. The foot became almost as delicate as the hand, and the cheek well-nigh as sensitive to atmospheric impressions as the ear is to acoustic vibrations. By reason of the difficulties which encompassed it, travelling became an art, involving in its practice many elements of science. If I preserved the air and seeming of a man with two good eyes, my step had to be as cautious and well considered as an Indian's on the war-path, and my dislike of being recognised by strangers as partially blind, was almost as great as his dread of detection by an enemy. Self-dependence delighted in obstacles. There was a pleasure in scouring strange regions alone ; and although I have often had my face severely cut by thorny branches while riding through the woods, and was frequently obliged to hold my right hand in front of my face, the elbow extended to the right, and the riding-whip to the left, for hours

together, as a protection to the upper part of the person, fatigue and wounds were alike accepted as a part of the salutary discipline. Boarding a steamer in the middle of the river, after night, by means of a yawl, after having descended a steep, slippery bank, with no assistance but from a cane, gave me quiet satisfaction. To roam about a strange city, and make myself master of its side-walks, gutters, and crossings, and become familiar with all its localities, thus qualifying myself to become a guide to others, was a favourite pastime. There was hardly a large town of the country in which I did not know the shortest way between any two given points. Self-conceit was gratified when, on being introduced to people who had heard of me, they exclaimed : "Why, I thought you could not see very well !" Mere walking was an intellectual exercise, and the mind found constant amusement in solving the physical problems which were ever demanding instant settlement ; as, for example, given the sound of a footfall, to find the nature and distance of the object from which it is reverberated ; or the space betwixt yourself and the gutter you are approaching ; or, amid the babel of a crowded thoroughfare, to ascertain by your ear when it will be safe for you to cross, and how long a time the rush of hurrying vehicles will allow you.'

Interesting as all this is, it is pleasant to have to tell, in conclusion, that those inestimable blessings, 'Wife, Children, and Friends,' have now rendered the exercise of these singular faculties no longer necessary to our author. He has exchanged them for the kind offices of those who love him ; and moves about the streets of Montgomery—his now settled home—with his hand always clasped in that of one or other of his children, 'who are as watchful and tender towards me,' he touchingly writes, 'as though they were Parent, and I the Child.'

LITERARY TRIBULATIONS.

THE full extent of the troubles of the writer of Fiction are known only to his persecuted self. He alone can tell the agony of having to listen to morose fellow-passengers who compare the demerits of his published writings with those of Jones's. He alone can understand the full force of unprejudiced testimony accorded in such terms as 'Ephemeral,' 'Creature of the day,' 'Overdrawn,' 'Tame,' 'Out of nature,' 'Libellous,' and 'Mere buffoonery.' In his own heart is shut up the horror of beholding persons, not naturally plethoric, asleep over his latest production. Indignation consumes him in silence in the circulating library, as, with a pardonable curiosity, he takes down his own volumes from their shelves, to find them virgin white, or to read in their pencilled margins, 'Romantic rubbish,' 'Rot,' 'See Walter Scott,' and 'I would advise no human being to take out this book.' He alone has the hideous privilege of comparing the public announcements of the gigantic success of his last venture with this private memorandum of his publisher—'The thing has hung fire, and three parts of the edition is left on our hands ;' nor dare he confide matters of such extreme delicacy even to the wife of his bosom.

Again, if he permit his name to accompany his works, he is subject not only of course to public detraction, but to a peculiar species of persecution at the hands of his friends. 'How could he,' they say, 'go and put that unfortunate man Smith into his book in that way ? Oh, nonsense ; it was no use to deny it ; why, it was as like as it could stare. Smith didn't much like it, he (informant) could tell him (writer of the work in question). Smith (he understood with sorrow rather than wonder) thought it a piece of confounded impudence, a breach of the rules of good society, and a sort of thing indeed that was not to be endured by any man (six feet in height).'

Now, as a matter of fact, the individual portrayed

in the fiction is in nine cases out of ten not Mr Smith at all, and has no connection with him except in so far, perhaps, as both real and imaginary characters are equally commonplace. But no matter for that; the unfortunate author is looked upon thenceforward in Smithtown much as an Englishman with a photographic apparatus would be regarded within the fortifications of Cherbourg. 'Why, the very scene of the story,' urge his accusers, 'was unmistakably Smithtown itself, and had a church, and a market-place, and all, without the least attempt at concealment.'

This nuisance, hitherto confined within moderate limits, and endured by the writer of Fiction, as many another offspring of malice and stupidity has to be, is now, it seems, about to become a public calamity of authors. No sooner is a novel successful, than a new description of writer—the gleaner, or after-novelist—arises, who, exploring the same field, or what he supposes to be the same field, as the great man did, will pick up all the bare facts and dull personages that genius has clothed in such beautiful garments, and present them to the public eye in their native drab.

A very little work—or rather, a very little book made out of somebody else's work—has recently come under our notice, called *Seth Bede*, the introduction to which runs modestly thus: 'The talented authoress of *Adam Bede* has, under fictitious names, made known to the world the peculiar virtues and characteristics of her two uncles. No one acquainted with either of them will dispute the correctness of the descriptions; they are life-like—photographs of both. As, however, there are many to whom even a short account of the life and labours of Mr Samuel Evans may prove interesting, these few unpretending pages are published. "The memory of the just shall be held in everlasting remembrance."

The character of the jackal is also held in deserved contempt by all honest persons. Whether the jackal in question be male or female, we do not know—for while denying to its pillaged victim her shield of anonymity, it shelters itself in complete obscurity both as to name and sex—but we do hope that it may be neither the begetter nor producer of any similar animal. We cannot imagine a much greater evil happening to Literature, than an influx of catchpenny stuff which feeds a morbid curiosity at the expense of turning what has been the innocent delight of all into an offensive individual lampoon.

In this particular instance, it is true, the virtues of *Seth Bede* are not denied, but instead of being painted for us by the hand of a master, as in the novel, they are daubed in after the vulgar journeyman fashion of tract-literature. We do hope that we have seen the last of this new Tribulation. Otherwise, let Dickens, and Thackeray, and Anthony Trollope beware. There will be neat little volumes—called, perhaps, the Select Library of Fact—coming out coincidentally with their every new story, or produced retrospectively, to supply 'what has so long been a void in literature' with regard to their old ones. *Pickwick in the Flesh* will contain the description of 'one Mr John Thompson, commercial traveller to the house of Muggins & Co, who, after retirement from his profession with a moderate competency, took an excursion with some friends into Kent, and encountered certain adventures. He was, it will be shewn, considerably less benignant than in the immortal story, and did not in reality wear gaiters, but Wellington boots. His place of residence, so far from being Goswell Street, was George Street, Clerkenwell, the fourth door on the left hand, at present in the occupation of a respectable newsmonger.' Can we not imagine how the hack-writers would go to work upon such a subject!

Again: 'Becky Sharp was, in truth, Miss Harriet Brown, and—singular to say—not a governess at all, but a teacher of fancy screen-work, residing in

Tottenham Court Road, and universally respected. The great Titmarsh travelled with her in the same omnibus day after day for weeks, for the purpose of studying her character. Rawdon Crawley was notoriously (to those who knew his lordship best) an admirable likeness of Lord C——e, commander-in-chief in I-d-a.'

There will, in short, be absolutely no safety for any writer who does not confine himself to the pure mathematics. All poets, with the exception of the author of *Paradise Lost* (and something might be told even there about the contractor at whose foundry the cannon for the angelic armies were cast), will presently share the fate of the prose writers; and at last no book will be considered complete until it has been supplemented, by some literary scavenger, with a 'Key.'

THE BATEMAN HOUSEHOLD, AND WHAT BECAME OF THEM.

CHAPTER XI.—THE HAUNTED HOUSE.

A LONELY mansion, uninhabited by mortals, and with the reputation of having a spiritual guest, is not the cheerfulness of shelters in a windy winter midnight. There was nothing of welcome in the look of Ladybank as the moon came out, and shewed to those two wanderers the white house standing under the white Fell. As soon as the immediate satisfaction of being behind the courtyard wall, and out of the wind, had abated, they began to think what a dreary spot it was, and to conjure up the tales they had heard of it.

'It wants but one half hour of midnight,' observed Ryder, taking out his watch, which the flying clouds now permitted him to see for the first time; 'we are come just in time for the gentleman in the attic.'

Marsden shuddered. 'Hark!' cried he; 'what's that?'

'It's a sprained ankle acting upon an imaginative mind,' returned Ryder. 'We must get inside, or we shall be frozen to death. How the bolts and latches do rattle about this confounded place; I should not have thought there was so much old iron left in it.'

While he spoke, as if the deserted mansion felt indignant at the remark, and wished to give report of all its metallic treasure in one clang, an eddying gust whirled screeching and jangling through the courtyard, and burst open the vast hall-door in front of them with a crash that echoed from the basement to the ruined upper floors.

'That is an invitation for us to walk in, and make ourselves comfortable,' quoth Ryder. 'The footman has unfortunately gone out for a holiday, and the butler declines to open the door, it not being his "place."

Both these young men were brave, but with a difference. The one had imagination, and could not free himself from the supernatural suggestions which the hour and scene awakened; the other only saw before him an old ruin, about which people told lying tales.

Already refreshed by his halt, Ryder once more took up his living burden, and carried him up the worn stone steps to the now open door. The threshold was certainly not inviting. An empty hall, stone floored, and of considerable extent, lay before them, with doorways—but no doors—opening on the right hand into apartments more or less damaged by the elements. On the left hand, a well staircase wound to the top of the house; the steps of it were of stone, but the landings of rotting wood, while of the banisters, some lay in the hall beneath, where they had dropped, and the rest, but dangerously useful, tottered

in their places, with great gaps between them. The apartments on the ground and first floors had all their casements blown in or wrenched out by violence of the elements, or of man; but on the second floor, as the young men knew, there were still two rooms in tolerable preservation. The door of the first of these was closed, and resisted their utmost efforts, but the second admitted them into a chamber at least weather-proof, where they determined to remain. Beyond this floor, some wooden steps, upon which no man would trust his feet, led up into the roofless attics. The 'situation,' it must be confessed, was thrilling and melodramatic enough, and not only did Ryder cease to make flippant allusions to the supposed spiritual tenant of the domain, but the very dog crouched and whined, as it had not done, save once, during the whole of their perilous journey. The wind had by this time greatly moderated, but there was yet enough abroad to flap the heavy front-door by fits against the wall, to which its former violence had driven it.

'I will run down and stop that!' cried Ryder, suiting the action to the word, and followed by Carlo, who evidently hailed the movement as a prelude to departure from such unpleasant quarters. With considerable difficulty, for it hung upon only one rusty hinge, the young man replaced the door in its proper position. The staples that had formerly held the bolts within had been forced away by the late crash, and the rusty key which still remained in the lock outside could not be moved; Ryder therefore turned it from without, to prevent the doors flapping back again, and re-entered through one of the gaps in the wall. As he did so, the faint echo of a footstep seemed to approach from behind the western wall of the courtyard; it came nearer and nearer—the slow, determined, but halting step of a heavy man—and Ryder was on the point of rushing out to discover what visitor could be coming to such a place at such a time, when a sharp cry, almost a scream, from Marsden arrested him, and caused him to spring upstairs without the delay of an instant. The lame man was sitting upright on the bare floor of the room, with a face far paler than even the great pain from which he suffered warranted, and holding his finger in the air, as if demanding silence.

'Hush, hush,' cried he, in that suppressed tone, perhaps the most awe-inspiring within the compass of human speech, and pregnant of the long watches of the night, and sickness unto death; 'there is some one in that next room—there is, so help me Heaven! Hush!'

'I will *not* hush,' exclaimed Ryder, aloud and angrily, indignant at the panic to which he felt himself succumbing slowly in spite of himself; 'I will not be fooled by the wind. I tell you, the wind can make any noise.'

'The wind can't turn a key in a keyhole,' replied Marsden hoarsely. 'Listen to *that*!'

Certainly, the rusty lock which Ryder had but a minute before fastened was now shot back, and they heard the great door grind on its rusty hinge, and then reclose: the dog, too, which had been left below, began to bark furiously, as at some new-comer.

'It is twelve o'clock,' murmured Marsden solemnly; 'it is the hour and the man!'

Ryder did not answer, but trod softly through the open chamber-door to the head of the staircase, from which, though somewhat dimly, he could discern every flight. Marsden, unable, and perhaps unwilling to move, kept his eyes on his friend, and gathered, as well as he could, in that dim uncertain light, from his countenance, which now grew earnest enough, what was passing below.

And this it was which was taking place upon that ruined staircase before Ryder's eyes and ears.

A heavy step, without any bodily presence, was coming up deliberately, stair after stair. There was

its heavy thud upon the stone when on the steps, and its hollow beat upon the wood when it crossed the landings, not only distinct, but loud, so that its echoes made themselves heard all over the ruined mansion. One foot was brought slowly after the other on to each step, as a very lame man would bring it. As the footsteps approached, so as to bring full within the young man's vision the person who was coming up stairs, if he had been corporeal substance—which, however, he was not—the spectacle which the dog presented was strange indeed. Carlo did not seem at all terrified, but transported with impotent rage. Coming up at the same slow rate with the footsteps themselves, he delayed upon each step, as they did, to snap and snarl at the unseen feet which lodged there. With open jaws, it flew at the invisible ankles, at the supernatural trouser-skirts, as it were, of the heavy treading spirit—if such it was—which perseveringly and unheedingly came on until it was within a stair-flight of the listener. Then Ryder, closely watched by Marsden, who had dragged himself to the doorway of the chamber, descended with ashy lips, but determined tread, some half-a-dozen steps, and on the last of these, and in the centre of it, awaited the ghostly foot-tread.

'It shall come *through me*,' muttered the young man to himself, 'and then, and not till then, will I believe it.' Close beneath him—close, to within three steps of him—ascended the invisible Thing; ascended, too, the dog, taking no notice whatever of Ryder, but snapping and wild with fury as before. Then the young man's determination gave way. He did not flee, but he withdrew to one side of the broad stone-step, away from the banisters, by which the Thing seemed to guide itself, as though they were reliable, and it were in the flesh; and there, with his back to the wall, awaited it. When the Thing, still accompanied by the dog, stood on the very step with him, the atmosphere, which had seemed to be growing colder and colder, became positively icy: he seemed to congeal there as he stood, and only to regain his circulation slowly as the awful Sound went by him, up the remaining steps, along the floor, close by the almost paralysed Marsden, and then up the wooden star with redoubled clangour, into the roofless attics, followed by the dog.

At the same time, a piercing shriek rang through the deserted house from the room into which they had not entered. There was enough of humanity in the voice to disenthral the young men's minds, half-stupified as they were with supernatural terrors. Ryder rushed up stairs, and with one blow of his foot burst open the locked chamber-door; the next instant, he uttered such an exclamation of pity and astonishment, that Marsden crawled hastily to the entrance of the apartment to perceive with a wonder only second to that with which he had listened to the mysterious footfall, the original of Luders's picture—the attenuated form and haggard features of the lost Phoebe Rosthwaite!

CHAPTER XII. THE LAMP IN THE WINDOW.

'Here they are at last!' cried Florence Bateman, late on the afternoon of the Hunting of the Sweetmart, as she stood with her sister at the drawing-room window, looking out upon the gathering clouds. 'I was afraid the poor Pups would have been drenched.'

'I only see Mr Luders,' answered Ellen; 'where are the other two?'

'They all three went together, so the rest are probably behind,' returned the elder sister. 'I don't wonder at their letting Mr Luders walk ahead of them, I'm sure; for my part, I cannot look upon that wretch now without loathing. He has a darker scowl upon his face to-day than usual; I wonder what wickedness he is thinking about!'

'Murder,' responded Ellen with much solemnity; then, remembering what she knew about the man, or thought she knew, and looking again at his really rather diabolical countenance, she regretted her levity. A cold shudder passed, too, over Florence. 'Hush, Ellen; he positively does look very horrible.'

'But, Florence, only suppose if the others don't come home; we never can be left in the house alone with him, with no defenders except Mrs Allwynne and the maids. He'll murder us for having looked into his sketch'—

'Good afternoon, young ladies,' cried the West Indian, rudely approaching the window, and flattening his nose against it, unbecomingly, with the evident intention of making sure that there was no one in the apartment besides themselves. 'So we are to be all alone to-day, it seems; we must make ourselves the more agreeable to one another, must we not?'

'Sir?' exclaimed Florence haughtily, and justly incensed at the unaccustomed tone of familiarity which the young man assumed.

'You must make yourself extra agreeable to me,' repeated Luders in explanation, turning round upon his nose as upon an axis, so that it seemed wonderful that the plate-glass didn't break with the pressure, and cut it off—that you must, both you and the other. We will have a very cozy evening, will we not?'

The hearts of the two young women began to beat very fast indeed; not by any means with satisfaction at the prospect of the coziness in question, but because it had dawned upon them simultaneously that Mr Bartholomew Luders was a trifle the worse for liquor. 'I wish,' whispered Ellen to her sister, 'that even Carlo were here.'

Luders, whose unattractive face still adhered to the glass, caught the sound of this sentence without the sense. 'Carlo is with your two young men,' he said; 'with Marsden and the Model Pupil. They mean to come over the Weirdale Fells to-night.' He gave such a devilish chuckle as he imparted this piece of information as made the blood of at least one of his auditors run cold.

'How will they find their way?' inquired Florence with an unconcerned air as she could assume.

'They won't find their way. I am to put the lamp in the north passage-window,' returned he grinning; 'as if that was any good when the snow falls.'

'They will never start in the snow?' exclaimed Florence earnestly, forgetting her own cause for terror in the peril of others.

'They will, though,' cried Luders, nodding his head a great many times in malicious triumph. 'Ryder is afraid of nothing, of nothing whatever, he says; consequently, he is not afraid of Death. With a lily winding-sheet of snow about him, he will look quite pretty, won't he? Ha, ha, that makes you pale, does it, Miss Florence? He will never live to be a baronet, then, by any accident—never have even a chance of making anybody "My Lady," will he?'

Florence's face grew crimson as he spoke, but her eyes only bespoke contempt, not anger. Ellen sank into a chair, and hid her face within her trembling hands.

'She is crying for the other,' observed Luders, winking confidentially. 'I should like to see you cry for Ryder. Do.'

Florence stood like a statue, only her rising colour betraying that she heard the insult; but with an unseen foot she beat the ground beneath her, as though it were prostrate Fear, and she would keep him down.

'Are you not hungry, Mr Luders?' said she. 'We have dined' (which was not strictly true, however), 'but dinner shall be laid for you at once.'

'Thank you,' said he; 'but you must dine with me, nevertheless. I can't get on without female society: it is the atmosphere I breathe.'

'Certainly, if you wish it,' returned Florence; 'we will sit down with you.'

'All right,' replied the gallant young man; 'I do wish it; and with that he withdrew his nose from the window pane, and retired to his own apartment.

'What have you promised?' exclaimed Ellen, as soon as the dreadful face had disappeared from the spot which it had occupied like some badly framed and very uncomplimentary photograph. 'I wouldn't sit down at table with that man for worlds.'

'Then I must dine with him alone,' returned Florence quietly. 'I must not break my word, and indeed there is no help for me anyway; for this evening he must be kept in good-humour, and we may be sure that it is the last which he will ever pass at Teesdale How.'

'I hope it may not be the last which we shall pass,' said Ellen sobbing. 'I do hope he will not murder us.'

'Pooh, pooh,' replied Florence laughing; 'there is mighty Jane, the cook, to help us, and I will see she sharpens the kitchen-chopper. You go to your room until the bell rings, and then come down to dinner, or not, as you please.'

'I would never leave you alone with the wretch,' cried Ellen, throwing her arms round her sister's neck—an action she always practised when in difficulties—but were ever two young women placed in so dreadful a position before?

As soon as Florence was alone, she despatched by the hands of the fleet Elizabeth—who was directed to run all the way without stopping—a note to Mr Brooklet, the clergyman, stating in forcible terms that she and her sister, being left alone in the house with female domestics only, were frightened at the chance of thieves, and begging of him to permit his man-servant to come at once, and pass the night at Teesdale How. Florence's real opinion was that Luders was something more than intoxicated—that he was, in short, partly out of his mind; and subsequent events went to considerably strengthen that supposition.

At six o'clock, the dinner-bell rang as usual, and Mr Luders, whom the interval seemed to have greatly sobered, took his seat at the table with his two young hostesses. His conversation was no longer impertinent, but whenever either of his fellow-pupils was mentioned, his face suffered a peculiar and horrible change. He did not attempt to conceal his satisfaction at their probable peril, and his malignity was the more repulsive to his present auditors, as, except on the occasion of the sketch-book *fracas*, they had never seen him exhibit any abhorrence of his companions before. Later in the evening, when they were in the drawing-room, where, on account of its northern aspect, the roaring of the wind, and the thick soft thud of the snow, could be heard very distinctly, he grew quite maniacal in his endeavours to terrify the poor girls.

'Did you not hear something in that last blast?' cried he, 'beside itself? Did you not hear a despairing shriek, as from some lost traveller, wearied out and dazed by the blinding snow? Was not that Carlo's bark? Should you not send out somebody with a candle to look after two such nice young men?' inquired he mockingly. 'Elizabeth did not wait at table; perhaps you have sent her over to Weirdale after them. What a pity it is you have no man in the house!'

'There is a man, thank you,' replied Florence Bateman quietly, as she pulled the bell-rope twice. 'Pray, do not think that we are solely indebted to you for protection this dreadful night. Richard,' said she, as Mr Allen Brooklet's powerful man-of-all-work answered the summons, 'please to bring in the tea.'

Sagacious Mrs Allwynne had entered the room a few minutes before, upon pretence of some house-keeping matter, and given her young mistress to understand that help was come. The twice-rung bell had been

the signal agreed upon for the unmasking of the battery—for the appearance of stout Richard Melbreak, never was knight more welcome to distressed damsel, than was he to the two young ladies; and to the younger in particular, since her sister had not intrusted her with her plan, for fear of disappointment. The unpleasantly high spirits of Mr Bartholomew Luders became, on the contrary, proportionally depressed at his opportunity for annoying defenceless persons being so suddenly abbreviated. When the young ladies almost immediately afterwards announced their intention of retiring, he did not make any opposition; and after having brought up the drawing-room lamp, and placed it in the north passage-window, he himself retired to his couch.

The two sisters, although relieved from all apprehension on their own account, were by no means in a condition for speedily seeking sleep: the furious tempest which drove against their window-panes reminded them too forcibly of the peril of those exposed to its violence, and they knew enough of the hill-country in winter-time to understand the full extent of the danger. Before they went to bed, they had satisfied themselves of the light being in its promised position; but presently, through much talking of lost travellers on the snowy Fells, or through distrust of Luders, or through that vague sense of evil induced by surrounding circumstances, which is called presentiment, they began to imagine that the lamp had been removed. They did not mention the idea to one another, but each lay trying to battle with her own foolish apprehension, being fully convinced that the lamp had been really placed there, and knowing that no one could have taken it away without their knowledge, since the person would have had to pass and repass their chamber-door to do so. After a time, the snow and wind abated, and that almost impenetrable darkness succeeded, which was just then enveloping the maimed young man and his brave friend upon the extremity of Weirdale Fell; even in that comfortable chamber it seemed to make itself felt, and to give to the dying embers in the grate an unnatural lustre.

At last, and breaking a long silence, Florence whispered, with that disregard to logic which is peculiar to people in bed: 'Ellen, Ellen, are you asleep?'

'No,' replied the other young lady; 'are you? I can't get to sleep; I can't help thinking of him, do what I will.'

'Never mind him, darling; we shall not be plagued with him much longer, depend upon it.'

'I mean, I can't help thinking of poor Mr—Mr—Mr Marsden, out on the Fells to-night.'

'I was thinking of that too,' returned Florence, neither surprised nor annoyed by her mistake, as she would have been in the daytime; 'and I can't get it out of my mind that that lamp is *not* in the passage—we surely ought to be able to see the light under the door.'

In an instant, Ellen was out of bed, and had groped her way to it. She undid the bolt, and turned the handle with such care—for perfect noiselessness, however unnecessary, seems always to befit such occasions—that nothing was heard, even by herself, save the rapid beating of her own heart. Florence heard nothing at all. 'Why don't you open the door?' whispered she from the bed. 'Can you not find it?'

'It is open,' returned the other beneath her breath; 'the lamp has been taken away.'

It was horrible, in that dread waste and middle of the night, to feel the secret conviction that there was a murderer then abiding under their roof. They became, at once, as certain of Luders's intention to compass the death of his companions, as though they had seen him, with slippery feet and anxious eyes, steal by their chamber-door, and remove the lamp that was to be life itself perhaps to those for whom it was set. They even began to

remember the exact time at which they had thought they heard his footsteps.

'What shall we do, Florence, dear? What shall we do?'

Florence's answer was the spurt of a match and the lighting of the tall toilet-candles. 'These may yet be in time,' said she gravely; 'we will put them in the place of the lamp.'

The two sisters in their long white night-dresses, each like some angelic acolyte with her lighted torch, hastened along the passage; but as they drew near to the north window, behold, there stood the drawing-room lamp as Luders had placed it, only that the lamp was out.

'Heaven forgive me!' cried Ellen, as she put her candle in its stead, 'but I really thought that Mr Luders had taken it away. I never knew the lamp to behave so ill before.'

Florence took it up, and having examined it, inquired whether her sister knew when it had last been fed.

'I filled it full of oil myself,' replied she, 'this very evening, so that the supply should not fail through the night.'

'Then is that man as wicked as we thought him to be,' returned Florence solemnly: '*the oil must almost all have been poured away before this lamp was set here!*'

OUT ON THE TURBARIES.

At the last annual meeting of the Somersetshire Archaeological Society, which took place at Glastonbury, it was proposed that the members should have a botanical day on the turf-moors. Unfortunately, the weather, which no archaeological secretary has ever yet been able to propitiate, prevented this excursion. But as I lingered on in the neighbourhood for some time, I took the opportunity of a fine day for a solitary ramble over the *turbaries*—the provincial name given to the peat-bogs.

Under the shelter of the anonymous, I will confess to my non-scientific readers that I am not a botanist, nor an archaeologist, nor a geologist, but simply a humble individual who tries to see things the reverse of barren between 'Dan and Beersheba,' and who likes to know something of any new locality where he may happen to be. A good deal might be said of the botany of this district, which is peculiar and interesting. There are many varieties of heath, willows, bog-myrtles, and numerous other ligneous plants, lichens, sphagnum, and mosses. The red blossoms of the *Epilobium angustifolium* make their appearance on newly turned ground, and in the flowering season, form a gay and conspicuous border to the ditches which intersect the country. Before going into details, it may be as well to give some idea of the aspect of these marsh-lands, once the estuary of the Bristol Channel. The 'levels' are about two hundred square miles in extent; the coasts of the old time are still clearly marked in the hills which form the boundaries of this district; and when viewed from the heights of Quantock or Mendip, the effect is, even now, that of promontories and islands standing out of a smooth green sea; when, if white mists shroud the pastures, the illusion is complete. Deposits of marine exuviae form lines of shore round the villages of Chedzog, Middlezog, Weston, and Zogland or 'sea-land.' At the present time, a great part of these flats are below the level of the spring-tides; but barriers formed by nature and sustained by art keep back the sea. However, in the pre-historic period, when there were no acts of parliament to effect the drainage of the district, nature had it all her own way, and the consequence was that, when the accumulated tidal deposits became consolidated, the barrier kept back the sea, but the interior low lands became a morass or lake of fresh

water, and in such situations began the manufacture of peat.

The process is interesting, shewing step by step how persistently nature works. First, the reeds spring up, because they can raise themselves out of the water; then other aquatic plants help themselves up by the stalks of the reeds, till at length the conifers thicken the mass so much that the surface becomes suitable to the sphagnum tribe, to which succeed lichens, rushes, and grasses. This spongy mass of vegetation consolidates, sinks below the surface, falls to the bottom, and there decays, receiving year by year a fresh accumulation. This decomposed matter becomes a semi-fluid and dark-coloured substance, which undergoes fermentation, hence the bituminous and inflammable properties of peat, into which this homogeneous mass is now converted. In this process, nature requires that the water should be quiescent, for should any current disturb the stagnant morass, it would carry off the astringent juice, which is the chemical agent for turning the decomposed vegetable mass into peat. The 'moss-water,' as it is called, is highly antiseptic, and of so astringent a nature, that an attempt was made some years ago to apply it to tanning purposes. The thickness of this congeries of plants is from fifteen to eighteen feet; it is kept buoyant by the water in the basin which holds it. In winter, the peat rises so much above the level of the surrounding land, that people who live on the borders of the turbaries cannot see objects which are clearly discernible in summer.

The substratum of these marshes is red marl, overlaid by blue and white lias rock; but the alluvial deposit is very rapid in some places. An old channel of the river Brue was excavated to the depth of 20 feet, and afterwards abandoned: it was completely filled up again in about twenty-five years. This may give some idea of the changes which are constantly going on, and the extent to which the hills are scoured to enrich the vales. In this particular instance, the accumulation is due to the influx of the muddy waters of the Bristol Channel, which the laureate calls 'the yellow sea;' a characteristic colouring certainly not so picturesque as the 'deep blue,' but, in a utilitarian point of view, a good deal better.

As early as the time of Edward I., a royal commission was obtained to inquire into the best means of protecting the marsh-lands from the 'plague of waters'; and the abbots of Glastonbury were strenuous in their efforts to preserve their rich pastures from inundation. At the dissolution of the monastery in 1565, nature did what she liked for a time—turned the cultivated fields into morasses, and went on making peat again with great activity.

But during the last half century the improvements in draining have been such that annually a greater amount of surface is rendered fit for agricultural operations; and probably before long there will scarcely be a vestige of a peat-bog in the district.

There is something very peculiar and striking in the present aspect of the turbaries: you see neither fields nor trees, nor any other object generally associated with the rural landscape, but only scores of little black pyramids of turf, set in rows upon the bare ground, which has been denuded of spine. At some seasons of the year, there is an appearance of great activity. The work begins somewhat in the following manner: The delver first marks out with great accuracy a pit of ten feet square. With his turf-scythe, he removes the spine as useless. He then proceeds to cut out 'brocks,' which are placed round the mouth of the pit; the bearer removes them to the drying-place, where each brock is split into three. After a certain amount of drying, they are placed into heaps called 'ruckles'; afterwards formed into open worked 'tunegars'; and lastly, ricketed ready for market. A curious effect sometimes takes place while working these pits. At the depth of perhaps

ten feet, within a foot or two of the clay on which the peat rests, the worker finds himself and his platform suddenly raised to the mouth of the pit. When this is caused by wind, this singular kind of locomotion is a steady quiet ascent, and the workman passes his scythe through the mass; the air escapes with a droning noise, the platform descends gradually, and he resumes his labours. But when produced by water, the 'lift' is by no means pleasant, as the floor rises with a violent rocking motion, and the pit is rendered useless. An old man told us that he had had 'many wind and water rides in his time.'

The products of this 'secondary fossil,' when subjected to what chemists call 'destructive distillation,' are various. We get paraffine for making candles and supplying lamps, naphtha and other productions of more or less commercial value. The charcoal which is obtained from peat is very valuable in the manufacture of iron, from the small quantity of sulphur it contains. Four tons of dried peat will give about one ton of charcoal, which is especially esteemed for its deodorising and purifying qualities.

The horns of the red deer, and the blackened trunks of oak and hazel trees, in a remarkable state of preservation, are often found in the peat. In short, 'underground oak,' as it is locally called, is of quite common occurrence; it is supposed to have been washed down by the ancient floods, when the marsh was an estuary. But in some cases, the prostration of growing trees might have resulted from the morasses extending over neglected lands, which would give a far more recent origin to the timber thus found imbedded. It would be a mistake to attribute the same antiquity to all the turbaries. Some contain relics of an historical period, while, in one particular instance, a heap of Roman pottery and moulds for casting coin was found on an indurated stratum of peat, proving that the surface of the peat was dry, in this locality, when the country was occupied by that people. The turbaries afford extensive evidence of the Belgic as well as Roman occupation of the district. The rustics will tell you of 'Squire Phippen's big ship'—which made its appearance partially in dry weather—long since broken up for fuel, but which, it would seem, from all accounts, must have been a large canoe formed out of an oak-tree, hollowed by fire, as is now the custom among rude tribes.

The late Mr Stradling, a local antiquary, collected many British remains in the turbaries—namely, flint-spears, hunting-spears, knives, and ornaments of British brass; also some paddles or oars, which are of the same form as those used by the Welsh at the present day for their coracles. The turbaries have often rewarded the antiquary who has himself 'turned to' with spade and shovel to seek the buried treasures of the past. Mr Stradling relates that a young friend of his went out one day to try his hand at turf-bearing—a somewhat arduous task for an amateur. His labour, however, was singularly rewarded, for towards the close of a hard day's work, he espied something at the bottom of the pit which looked like a log of blackened wood; but, to his great delight, it turned out to be a box containing British brass ornaments, consisting of torques, armlets, and rings. The cist was made of maple, and soon fell to dust, on exposure to the atmosphere, but the contents have been carefully preserved. One of these specimens of antiquity appears to resemble 'the Jogh-draoch, or chain-ring of divination discovered in Ireland, and which Megrich says was worn on the third finger of the left hand of the Arch-Druid.'

What would not one have given to have lifted the box which had closed upon the secrets of two thousand years ago! Strange mutations have changed since then. How long, and yet how short a time! The ichthyosaurus was entombed in the adjoining blue lias, how many ages before the Belgic lady lost her

cist of trinkets? But human interest transcends even the wonder felt at the vastness of geologic time. We cannot help thinking of the 'level lake' of those days, over which scudded the rudely shaped canoe, freighted with men and women, returning, perhaps, from the celebration of the mysterious rites of Druidism. We may observe that on the other side of the Mendip range, at Stanton-Drew, there are some highly interesting Druidical remains, consisting of two circles of stones. Some archaeologists have claimed for this temple a greater antiquity than that of Stonehenge. But Belze and Hædui, priest and victim, in their sacred groves, pass before us like a dissolving view, giving place to the Roman occupiers of the district. Civilisation now flourished, and along with it, forgers and clippers of money, for there have been found in the turbaries clipped coins of the Roman emperors, and moulds for coins containing base metal. Traces of a Roman road across the marsh were discovered some years since, six feet below the present alluvial surface. It is supposed that there were pottery kilns in this district, from the mass of potsherds of Roman black ware which have been found in the turbaries. Scoriae of iron and pieces of charcoal were also met with; the Romans appear to have used the peat for fuel, and perhaps the workmen erected temporary huts for themselves, with blocks of turf, plastered with clay, as the dwellers on the moor do at the present day.

Some romantic traditions are associated with this district, unpromising as it seems. It is locally believed that King Arthur threw his magic sword, 'Excalibur,' into the stream of the little river Brue, which creeps through the marshes to the sea. An old Roman bridge, which is said to have marked the spot, existed till within a few years. And it is supposed that

The brave Geraint, a knight of Arthur's court,

was slain in battle at Langport on the moor. Mr Jones, in a paper of great research, seeks to identify Langport with Llongborth, celebrated in *The Elegy upon Geraint ab Erlyn*, by the prince-poet Igywarch Hœu. This old Welsh poem, translated, runs thus:

At Llongborth I witnessed the noisy tumult,
And biers with the dead drenched in gore,
And men blood-stained from the onset of the foe.

At Llongborth I saw the hurried rush
Of men with feet blood-stained,
(Crying): 'Hark! ye that be Geraint's men.'

At Llongborth was Geraint slain,
The bold warrior of the woodlands of Dyvnaint,
Slaughtering the foe as he fell.

CHILDREN'S DAY AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE.

AMIDST the many novel exhibitions which have been born of the Crystal Palace, is one which did not dawn on the prophetic genius of Chaucer, and was probably unthought of, when first the fairy tracery of iron and glass sprang from the ground; yet, on the best and most national principles, it ought to possess the greatest interest of all, excepting, perhaps, that marvellous gathering of all races—the first, perhaps, since Babel—when the crystal aisles literally fulfilled the dream of the ancient poet. We mean that vast gathering of national schools which now exhibits yearly at the Palace the musical progress of the people, or perhaps we should better say, the resuscitation of that musical talent of which the days of the Tudors bear record.

On the last occasion of this gathering, we found ourselves in front of the great orchestra, gazing on the vast assemblage of little ones that lined the amphitheatre from top to bottom with

Bright and ordered files,
Like spring-flowers in their best array,
All silence and all smiles.

Each separate school was distinguished by its own quaint and peculiar costume; and as there were forty-two of them, the gay blending of colour, scarlet, green, and dark purple, with tippets and caps of purest white, and patches of darker hue where the boys were seated, illustrated admirably Keble's pretty image of 'spring-flowers.' The quaintness in the form of their habiliments was not without its charm also, carrying the mind back, as it did, to the days of the *Vicar of Wakefield* and *Pamela*, and, by a glance at some of the boys, to a yet earlier period.

This bright group of young 'immortals' were prepared to sing, not only with the energy of childhood, but with considerable skill and power, some of the finest music of the church, although the programme modestly stated that 'the singing of the children was not intended as a musical display, but rather as a performance of simple psalmody.' The, at present, silent picture had a touching foreground. Immediately below the orchestra were a few—a very few—reserved seats, for it was a 'people's day,' and the Palace was their especial right; but beyond these a vast crowd, not of idle and critical spectators, but of warm-hearted, eager, hard-working folks, whose hearts would give an echo to every tender young voice among the choir. They have stolen a day from the hard struggle with Necessity to listen to the familiar voices, and gaze, with honest pride, on the innocent faces that 'light up the hearth' at home. Old grandmas, bending beneath the weight of years, toddle by, supported by kind arms, and cheered by filial voices, that would fain coax the faded senses into hearing and seeing 'our Jenny or Mary' perform in the coming chorus. Mothers are there, clasping and hushing their infants, and not, we verily believe, the less enjoying the treat because that little life—so weary a burden to a fine lady—throbs heavily upon their arm; and hard-working men, 'got up,' for the occasion, in their best, clean, decent, and respectable, make up the throng, looking eagerly and intelligently round on those mute, graceful figures which bring the beauty and the poetry of the wild superstition of other lands and ages to their island home.

On the great stands of orange-trees are perched all possible specimens of the genus 'boy,' whose merry and often grotesque faces might have served for models for some of the rollicking fauns which are so abundant among the statuary. Policemen stand about, acting as masters of the ceremonies, ordering the visitors for their own comfort, and explaining the (to them) familiar wonders of the place, with a generous enjoyment of the pleasure experienced by their countrymen; for 'funkeyism' is unknown to the intelligent men who form the Palace police, who sympathise with their own order.

At our feet, a family group, worthy of a Dutch painter's pencil, are gathered. A mother, decently clothed, though evidently very poor, seated on the floor, hushes a tiny babe; by her side, her husband extends his sturdy limbs, holding a basket with the family provisions, to which, perhaps, some cheap luxury of the Palace may by and by be added. Their eyes are endeavouring to make out their little 'Sarah' amongst the bright group of scarlet petticoats; and there is great triumph in the tone with which

'mother' announces to 'father' that she has discovered that important little personage at last. We are greatly interested in this household; we enjoy their pride and pleasure, and their wonder at the fine place and '*the images*,' as they call the statues, evidently classing them with the Italian boy's wares with which they are familiar. We think it would be pleasant enough to take these country folks round the Palace, and explain to them some of its gathered treasures; point out to them the vegetables and the products of other lands; and illustrate the earth, by its gifts, in this great 'show' of the universe. Would not such a guide (or a few such) be a great help and a great addition to the pleasure of the place on such days? We remember that on a former 'people's day,' when we were shewing the courts to some tiny nieces, a small crowd of intelligent-looking poor people gathered round and listened eagerly, till, when telling the children the story of Pompeii in its own court, they quite pressed on us to hear the faintly detected tale.

But the organ peals forth a volume of glorious sound, and George Cooper gives a lesson in music by the voluntary he performs, and quiets and fixes all spirits by its solemn soothing. A pause, and then the thousands of children rise as one, and looking, at a distance, very like little painted dolls, begin Martin Luther's glorious Old Hundredth. At first, a full chorus of all their voices, then the girls' sweet trebles alone, then again the united volume of sound. This psalm was succeeded by Heber's missionary hymn to an air of Mendelssohn's; but the musical gen of the performance was a hymn called *Sleepers, Awake! a Voice is calling*, the music also by Mendelssohn, in which the alternation of the bass and treble, and the sweet manner in which the voices held a note through two bars, whilst the organ accompanied with the refrain of the air, called forth the most rapturous applause, and was repeated.

We observed two or three of the fathers of the oratory listening attentively to this part of the performance.

Three other well-chosen psalms closed the performance; and then the mass of listeners rose, and many a full untutored voice joined with English loyalty in the national anthem. The music over, the schools descended into the body of the Palace, and the reunion of the young singers and their friends began. Much of congratulation, and praise, and pleasure evidently then ensued, and the families dispersed about, gazing eagerly at the wonders offered to their inspection.

The picture-gallery was crowded, and the pre-Raphaelites might have rejoiced in the simple-minded admiration which the 'great untaught' bestowed on the specimens of early art, and the simple good faith with which they gazed on the green-winged cherubs and un-idealised Madonnas of the beginning of painting.

The conduct of this multitude was worthy of all praise for courtesy and a kind wish to help or please each other, while the strictness with which they bestowed on all around the epithets of 'Ma'am,' 'Sir,' and 'Miss' was remarkable.

The fountains were all displayed in the course of the afternoon, and crowds gathered round to see water in its holiday-dress making its summer sport. The children, with little mugs, caught the water as it fell, and drank it eagerly, whilst some of the boys walked about and offered it to the company—one assuring us that he would bring us as much as we liked for a halfpenny!

We walked from the great fountain, where we had met a friend, down towards the bowling-green, and, seated under an old tree, watched the sports which the populace provided for themselves. 'Kissing in the Ring,' and 'Hunt the Slipper,' were evident favourites. The numbers assembled in the grounds

appeared all ripe for fun, and enjoying to a greater extent the fresh pure air, the greensward, the trees, and the exercise, than even the marvels of the interior of the Palace. A great boon that evening's freedom and fresh air must have been to the toil-fettered denizens of the great city. But the children were everywhere the people paramount of the day, and threw in, doubtless, the chief element of mirth and enjoyment amongst the graver grown-up pleasure-seekers.

The scene was, as we have said, full of a deep and national interest. These children are the future people of England. In many a home 'to be,' the mothers will sing thus well beside the cradle, will know enough to teach their little ones of lands and things beyond the blue seas, and of inventions and scientific discoveries which will lay many a ghost of old ignorances, and open many a channel to improvement hereafter. Wonderful, indeed, is the progress already made in educating the million, since the days when a coco-nut passed for the egg of a marvellous bird, or when men dreamed of

The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads
Do grow beneath their shoulders.

Nay, even within our own recollection, knowledge appears to have put on the seven-league boots of the fairy tale, so rapid has been its progress. We remember almost the *premier pas* of that wonderful march which has gone throughout the length and breadth of the land, and, in a degree, visits its darkest corners. Much, very much, still remains to be done, but it is encouraging to look back on the past, and see what

Footprints on the sands of time

it has left already.

LOVE'S COMPARISONS.

On! bright is the rose when the sunshine is glinting,
And painting its petals with hues from above;
But warmer than even its exquisite tinting,
The rich glowing cheek of the maid that I love.

And jetty the gloss on the plumes of the raven,
And foamy the twine which the silkworms have wove;
But darker, and softer, and radiant of heaven,
The bright flowing hair of the maid that I love.

Inviting the cherry, which welcomes the kiss
Of the sun, as it streams through the fruit-laden grove;
But what shall describe the elysium of bliss,
Which dwells on the lips of the maid that I love?

Deep blue are the coralline caves of the ocean,
Reflecting the azure of heaven above;
But deeper, and bluer, and full of devotion,
The soft liquid eyes of the maid that I love.

And airy the zephyr, whose balmy breath brings
Sunny dreams of delight from Arabian grove;
But lighter than even his bliss-laden wings,
The innocent step of the maid that I love.

And pure is the lily, just washed by the shower,
And pure is the down on the wing of the dove;
But purer than ever was dove or was flower,
The taintless young soul of the maid that I love!

G. D.